

## Worship and Song and Praise



### SABBATH—JULY 30

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** 1 Chronicles 16:8–36; Psalm 32:1–5; Psalm 51:1–6, 17; Philippians 4:8; Revelation 4:9–11; Revelation 5:9–13.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Sing a new song to the Lord. All you people of the earth, sing to the Lord” (Psalm 96:1, NlrV).

**KING DAVID'S STORY IS WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE FOR MANY REASONS.** His life and reign (rule) are the center of an important part of Israelite history. And we can learn many spiritual lessons from him, both from his good actions and his bad.

This week we will begin by using some examples from David and his life in order to dig deeper into the question of worship. What does worship mean? How should we do it? And what should it do for us? For in David we can see many examples of worship and song and praise. These things were an important part of his life and of his experience with the Lord.

So it must be with us too. This is very true if we always remember that the first angel's message in Revelation 14 is a call to worship. What does it mean “to worship”? How do we do it? Why do we do it? What part does music play in worship? What separates true worship from false worship?

These all are themes that we will touch on in different ways this quarter. We need to listen to the call: “Come, let us bow down and worship him. Let us fall on our knees in front of the Lord our Maker. He is our God. We are the sheep belonging to his flock. We are the people he takes good care of” (Psalm 95:6, 7, NlrV).

**SUNDAY—JULY 31****BETWEEN SAUL AND DAVID****(Psalm 51:1–6)**

**Read the following verses about David’s early life before he became king: 1 Samuel 16:6–13; 1 Samuel 17:45–47; 1 Samuel 18:14; 1 Samuel 24:10; 1 Samuel 26:9; and 1 Samuel 30:6–8. What does this tell us about David?**

God chose Saul as the first king of Israel because he was the kind of king that the people had asked for. But when God chose David to be the next king of Israel, He reminded Samuel that the Lord looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

David was not perfect. In fact, some would argue that David’s later sins were much more serious than Saul’s sins. But the Lord rejected Saul and forgave David’s worst mistakes. God even let David continue to be king. What made the difference?

**What important truth is found in Psalm 32:1–5 and Psalm 51:1–6 that is so necessary to faith?**

God is in the heart business. He reads the heart—the center of thought, inner attitudes, and reasons. But He can touch and change hearts that are open to Him. David felt how sinful his heart was. David repented,<sup>1</sup>

and he patiently accepted the results of his sins. Saul made outward confessions. But it was clear that Saul’s heart was not surrendered to the Lord. “The Lord placed on Saul the responsibility of the kingdom. But the Lord did not leave Saul to himself. The Lord caused the Holy Spirit to rest upon Saul to tell him of his own weakness and his need of God’s grace.<sup>2</sup> If Saul had depended fully upon God, God would have been with him. So long as Saul obeyed the will [plan] of God and let His Spirit lead him, God could reward his efforts with success. But when Saul chose to act independently of God, the Lord could no longer be his guide. Instead, the Lord had to reject him.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*,<sup>3</sup> page 636.

**Ask yourself, how is what goes on inside your heart different from what people see of you on the outside? What does your answer tell you about yourself?**

**MONDAY—AUGUST 1****A BROKEN HEART, A BROKEN SPIRIT (Psalm 51:17)**

**“The greatest sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. God, you will gladly accept a heart that is broken because of sadness over sin” (Psalm 51:17, NIV). Think about**

1. repented—having felt great sorrow for one’s sins and to want to stop sinning.

2. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness and mercy that He freely gives us in order to take away our sins.

3. Patriarchs and Prophets—patriarchs were leaders of God’s people in early Bible times, men such as Abraham and Isaac, or other leaders of Israel, such as Moses; prophets are men or women who are spokespersons for God.

these words of David about worship. (After all, in Israel during Bible times, sacrifice was an important part of worship.) Realize, too, that the word translated as “con-**trite**” (KJV and NKJV) comes from a Hebrew word that means “**crushed.**” What is the Lord saying to us? How are we to understand this idea along with the idea that there should be joy in our worship?

As Christians, we know that all people are fallen and sinful. This sinfulness includes each one of us. Think of the difference between what you know you could be and what you are. For example, there is a sharp difference between the kind of thoughts that you think and the kind that you know that you should think. There is a sharp difference between what you do and what you should do. There is a sharp difference between what you do not do and what you know that you should. When we look at Jesus, we see how weak we truly are. This is where our broken spirit and crushed and broken hearts come from. If people who claim to be Christians do not see this, they truly are not wise.

We are sinners, but God loved us so much that Christ came and died to take our place on the cross. Now His perfect life, His perfect holiness, and His perfect character<sup>4</sup> become credited to us by faith. Again, the theme of the “everlasting gospel” (Revelation 14:6) appears. Our worship should not just center on our own sinfulness.

It should also center on God’s wonderful answer to the sin problem: the Cross. Of course, we need that broken and crushed heart. And understanding how bad we are leads to joy, because we know that we can have eternal life anyway. Because of Jesus, God will not count our sins against us. This truth must always be at the center of all worship experiences, whether we worship as a group or alone.

## TUESDAY—AUGUST 2

### DAVID: A SONG OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP (1 Chronicles 16:8, 12, 16–22)

David understood God and His gift of salvation well. This understanding influenced his own life and the spiritual leadership over his people. David’s songs and prayers show a deep sense of respect for God. David loved and knew Him as a personal Friend and Savior.



David’s songs and prayers show a deep respect for God.

4. (God’s) character—the qualities of God that include His strength, goodness, love, and fairness.

According to 1 Chronicles 16:7, David gave Asaph, his chief musician, a new song of thanksgiving and praise on the day that the ark was moved to Jerusalem. This praise psalm has two important parts of worship. It says that (1) God is worthy of worship and that (2) people should worship God. In this song, David first asks worshipers to take an active part in worship.

Read the entire song in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36. Notice how often the following action words are used in the song: give thanks, sing, call on His name, seek the Lord, make known, talk of, declare, give glory to, proclaim (announce), remember, and bring an offering. David then lists some of the reasons why God is worthy of our praise and worship.

**According to 1 Chronicles 16:8, 12, 16–22, what were some of the events of the past that the people of Israel should let others know about? And according to verses 12 and 15, what special acts of God were they to remember?**

**The description about the covenant<sup>5</sup> takes up nearly a third of this thanksgiving hymn. In what way does the covenant relate to worship?**

The covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was based on His ability to make them a great nation, to bless them, and to bring them into the Promised Land. Their part was to love, obey, and

worship Him as their Father and God. Our lifestyle may be different today. But the same principle (important rule) still holds for us.

**Think about the ways David calls us to worship God. In our own time, place, and setting, how can these same ideas be used in our church worship of the Lord?**

### WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 3

#### DAVID'S SONG (Job 38:7)

**“The morning stars sang together. All of the angels shouted with joy” (Job 38:7, Nlrv).**

All through the Bible, we find music playing an important part of worship. In the verse above, the angels sang when the world was created. Second Samuel 22 shows a song that David wrote in praise of the Lord. (Quickly read through the song and note the important elements and how they are connected to worship.) The important point here, and in so many other places in the Bible, is that this is a song. It is music.

**What do Revelation 4:9–11; Revelation 5:9–13; Revelation 7:10–12; and Revelation 14:1–3 tell us about some things that go on in heaven where there is no sin? What are some of the themes shown in these verses? What can we learn from them about worship?**

5. covenant—promise or agreement between God and His people.

The theme of the songs, praise, and worship points to Jesus as Creator and as Savior. If the angels sing about this in heaven, then we should be doing it even more here on earth.



Angels sang when the world was created.

There is no question that song, music, and praise are part of our worship experience. As we have been created in God's image, we share a love and an appreciation for music. We cannot imagine a culture that does not use music in some way or another! Love and appreciation of music are woven into every part of our human experience. God surely made us that way.

There is a power in music to touch us and move us that other kinds of communication do not seem to have. At its best, music seems to lift us into the very presence of the Lord. Who has not experienced, at some point, the power of music to bring us closer to our God?

**What has been your own spiritual experience with the power of**

**music? What kind of music do you listen to? How does it influence your relationship with the Lord?**



Love of music is woven into who we are.  
God made us that way.

#### THURSDAY—AUGUST 4

#### SING A NEW SONG TO THE LORD! (1 Corinthians 10:31)

We have some of the words to the songs that David and others wrote. Sadly, we do not have any of the music itself. Using our God-given gifts (at least, those of us who have those gifts), we write our own music if not always our own songs. But as we all know, we do not do this in a lifeless space. We worship in relationship to the culture in which we live. This is a culture that influences us and our music. This can be a good thing, or this can be a bad thing. The hard thing is to know the difference.

**How can 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 4:8; and Colossians 1:18 give us principles (important rules)**

**that should guide us in the kind of music we have in our worship?**

Over the years, the question of music in worship has arisen in our church. Sometimes, it is hard to tell the difference between what is church music and worldly music. (Many times there is little or no difference!)

What is important for worship music is that it points us to the noblest, the best, and the most pure, which is the Lord. It should not please our lower senses. It should please our higher senses. Music is not neutral. It can move us to some of the highest spiritual experiences. Or it can be used by Satan to debase and degrade us—to bring out sexual desires and bad emotions. For example, consider the music industry today. It gives us powerful examples of how Satan has twisted another of God’s wonderful gifts to people.

Music in our worship services should be balanced. It should uplift our spirits, minds, and emotions. The words to songs, along with the music itself, should uplift us. They should ennoble our thoughts. And they should make us trust in the Lord who has done so much for us. Music can bring us to the foot of the cross. It can help us to understand what Christ has given us. This is the kind of music we need for our worship.

Again, cultures have different tastes in music. There are many kinds of music and musical instruments in our worldwide family. What is uplifting and encouraging to those in one culture might sound strange to those in another.

Either way, it is very important that we trust in the Lord’s guidance to help us to have the most spiritual music for our worship services.



**Music should bring us to the foot of the cross.**

**FRIDAY—AUGUST 5**

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “Let it be clear that human works cannot change nor influence our standing before God. Should faith and works buy the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under the control of the people whom He has created. Here is an opportunity [chance] for lies to be accepted as truth. If any man can earn salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic who tries to repent by ‘paying’ for his sins. In this way salvation may be earned as wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, earn salvation, then it must be grace that saves us—grace received by the sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is all a free gift. Justification [forgiveness] by faith is placed [put] beyond question. And when the great controversy [war between Christ and

Satan] is ended, the matter is settled that fallen man can never earn eternal life through good works.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, pages 19, 20.

Music “is one of the best ways of impressing the heart with spiritual truth. Often, when people become discouraged or feel hopeless, they remember God’s words or childhood songs that lift up their hearts. Temptation<sup>6</sup> loses its power over them. Their lives also take on new meaning and new purpose. And they are more willing to share courage and gladness with other people. . . .

“As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Really, many a song is prayer. . . .

“As our Savior leads us closer to God, the glory<sup>7</sup> of God may help us catch the themes of praise and thanksgiving from angels around the throne. And as the echo of the angels’ song

is heard in our earthly homes, hearts will be pulled closer to the singing angels in heaven. Heaven’s ‘singing’ begins on earth. We learn here the important part of its praise.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 168.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ In what ways do your culture and society influence the music in your church? Or do you deny that they do?

❷ Read the Ellen G. White quote in Friday’s study about music. How much of this do you experience with the kind of music that is part of your church’s worship service? What are ways that we can judge the important part of music in our church services? How can your church members work together to make sure that the music is spiritually uplifting, encouraging, and doing the work that it should?

6. temptation—the desire to sin.

7. glory—great beauty, power, and royal perfection.